

Treasure Chest
Sentence Segmenting
Neuhaus Education Center Activities

When children count the individual words in a sentence, they learn the concept that sentences are made up of a series of smaller pieces (words). This understanding will soon help them make the leap to understanding that words are made up of smaller pieces (e.g., syllables, onset-rimes, and phonemes).

What follows are three activities that help children learn to identify words in a sentence.

1: The teacher says a sentence. Children say parts of the sentence until they identify a single word.

1. Say a sentence.
2. Have the children repeat the sentence.
3. Ask one child to say part of that sentence. [Child responds.]
4. Repeat this sentence fragment.
5. Ask one child to say part of the sentence fragment. [Child responds.]
6. Continue until a child has identified a single word.

(Note: Children can break the sentence apart in any way, as long as the words are intact.)

Example:

Teacher: **The dog ran down the street.**
Children: **The dog ran down the street.**
Teacher: **Now, _____, say part of that.**
One child: **The dog ran down**
Teacher: **The dog ran down - say part of that.**
One child: **The dog ran**
Teacher: **The dog ran - say part of that.**
One child: **The**

Sample Sentences:

(Note: Begin with small sentences of only two or three words.)

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|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. Bugs bite. | h. A little girl ate the apple. |
| b. I sleep. | i. Three mice ran into a tunnel. |
| c. Mom bakes pies. | j. A few children missed the party. |
| d. I ride home. | k. The book belongs to my sister. |
| e. Aunt Rosa cooks food. | l. That pumpkin pie smells good. |
| f. The ant crawls slowly. | m. Six apples fell from the tree. |
| g. A squirrel climbed up the tree. | n. All the children sat quietly. |

2: The teacher asks several children to represent the words in a sentence by standing in front of a chair. As each child sits down, the group repeats the sentence and eliminates the word the child represents.

1. Place chairs in a row in front of the room. (Use one chair for each word in the sentence.)

Read a sentence (e.g., *The dog can bark*), and have the children repeat the sentence.

Choose one child to represent each word in the sentence, and have them stand in front of the chairs in sequential order.

2. Lightly touch the head of each child and say the word that he or she represents (e.g., *The dog can bark*).

Have all the children in the classroom say the sentence with you as you lightly touch the head of each child representing a word.

3. Have the fourth student sit down. Lightly touch the head of each standing student as all the students say the word that each standing student represents (e.g., *The dog can*).

Have the third student sit down. Lightly touch the head of each standing student as all the students say the word that each standing student represents (e.g., *The dog*).

Have the second student sit down. Lightly touch the head of the standing student as all the students say the word the standing student represents (e.g., *The*).

Sample Sentences:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. The girls sang songs. | g. The cake smells good. |
| b. A small boy sleeps. | h. Jack and Jill played. |
| c. The car went fast. | i. The birds flew south. |
| d. The glad lad sang. | j. We see the cat. |
| e. Pat baked a cake. | k. The big horse jumped. |
| f. The red phone rang. | l. A small mouse eats. |

(The activity can be continued with sentences of different lengths. The number of chairs and students must match the number of words in the sentence.)

3: Children say whether or not a sentence fits a pattern of one word for each of three circles.

1. [Show a picture of three circles.]

Say, "I'm going to say a sentence. *The bird sings.*"

Say, "Watch as I say the sentence again." Repeat the sentence and point to each circle as you say each word. Point and count the circles, "One, two, three. There are three circles."

2. Say, "I'm going to say another sentence. *An ant crawls.* Say the sentence." [Child repeats the sentence.]

Ask, "Let's count the words in this sentence." Repeat the sentence and point to each circle as you say each word together. Then count the circles again. "One, two, three. There are three words."

3. Continue with sentences that have three words. Then mix in sentences with four words. Have the child decide if each sentence has three words.

Sample Sentence:

- a. A dog barks.
- b. The fish swims.
- c. The boys sing.
- d. The girls dance.
- e. A cow sleeps.
- f. A clown laughed.
- g. The small ducks quack.
- h. The egg broke.
- i. The phone rings.
- j. The mouse ate cheese.
- k. The milk spilled.
- l. A brown dog jumps.
- m. The wind blows.
- n. The pig ate mush.
- o. The snakes hiss.